

HOUSE RESOLUTION 264
By Cooper B

A RESOLUTION to honor Sister Mary Noelita McDermott and
Sister Mary Philothea Blake for their 50 years of
faithful service to God and humanity.

WHEREAS, the members of this legislative body are pleased to specially recognize those committed Christians and servants of God who, early in life, have recognized a call from their Creator to a vocation of loving service and self-denial to advance God's will for the world; and

WHEREAS, two such dedicated servants of the Lord are Sister Mary Noelita McDermott and Sister Mary Philothea Blake, who, fifty years ago, took their vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, and soon embarked upon assignments as foreign missionaries; and

WHEREAS, both from the New York City area, Sister Mary Noelita and Sister Mary Philothea first met as young women preparing to take their vows; Sister Mary Philothea was sent to the Solomon Islands, where she spent 38 years, and Sister Mary Noelita was assigned to the Fiji Islands, where she spent 23 years, and it was many years before they again met; and

WHEREAS, although Sister Mary Noelita had little medical knowledge, she was assigned to head an infirmary at a small school of 100 children early in her career; however, the sisters share a talent for teaching and that led them back together to Memphis where they each live in separate Midtown convents; and

WHEREAS, Sister Mary Noelita came to Memphis 23 years ago to teach and is now Principal of the newly opened St. Patrick Catholic School on South Fourth Street; Sister Mary Philothea moved to Memphis a few months ago and is now secretary of the preschool, which serves children from low-income families; and

WHEREAS, over their 50 years as nuns, Sister Mary Noelita and Sister Mary Philothea have witnessed much change, including a relaxation of some strict rules, a modification of their

habits which eliminated the heavy head coverings and the institution of knee-length skirts; the clothing changes are in some respect welcome accommodations to the Memphis climate, but there is some regret for the loss of the easily recognizable traditional habits, which inspired troubled people to approach them for counseling and encouragement in their spiritual struggles; and

WHEREAS, although the Sisters have lived in many cities in many places over the years, they have no difficulty in connecting with people, and they cherish the many connections that they have each made in the course of their assignments; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that we pause in our deliberations to honor the exemplary lives of commitment and service of these two dedicated servants of God; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, that we honor Sister Mary Noelita McDermott and Sister Mary Philothea Blake for their half century of dedicated and loving service to God and to humanity.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we offer them our best wishes for every satisfaction and happiness in the future.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.